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ABSTRACT

The materials presented here are visual aids used in a presentation on citizenship instruction for older and physically challenged adults. They consist of a series of "screens" containing information on: demographic information on samples of citizenship students in 1995 and 1997, illustrating changes in the population; motivations of and barriers faced by the new population; effects of aging that have implications for the classroom; visual, hearing, and learning challenges for older learners, and classroom solutions for them; challenges from other sources, including poor study skills and literacy problems; the citizenship teacher's challenge; ways to address physical issues in the classroom environment; ways to address motivation and lifestyle challenges; a performance contract for students; a sample letter to the student's family affirming participation in citizenship learning; a sample unit outline; notes on possible classroom learning aids; sample visual aids for a unit on the three branches of the federal government; classroom procedures for dictation, testing, and use of realia; and a brief list of World Wide Web resources. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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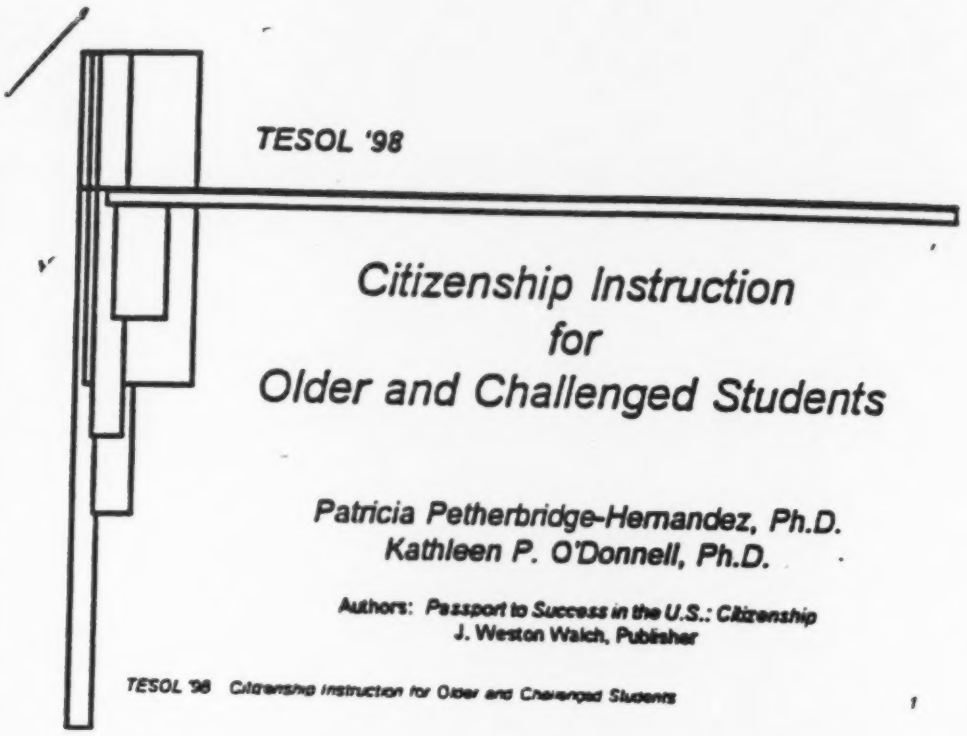

TESOL '98

Citizenship Instruction for Older and Challenged Students

Patricia Petherbridge-Hernandez, Ph.D.
Kathleen P. O'Donnell, Ph.D.

Authors: *Passport to Success in the U.S.: Citizenship*
J. Weston Walch, Publisher

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Agenda

- Introduction
- Who are the new citizenship students?
- Strategies for the cohort's needs
- Strategies for teaching citizenship topics
- Resources

Changes...

New policies → New cohort → New strategies

Who are the new students?

1995/1997 Demographics-Sample

	Total enrolled	Drop-outs	18-30	31-50	50+
1995	2221	781 (35%)	90 (4%)	617 (28%)	733 (33%)
1997	2253	392 (17%)	77 (3%)	779 (35%)	1005 (45%)

Total did not change substantially

- Drop-outs *decreased* by half
- 18-30 decreased slightly
- 31-50 increased
- 50+ increased from 33 to 45% of the total

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Who are the new students?

Who are the new students?

- Impelled to become citizens by loss of benefits
- Often did not pursue citizenship previously due to numerous barriers
- Now, they must face challenges or lose benefits

Between a rock and a hard place...

Who are the new students?

What barriers do they face?

- Less formal education
- Previous negative formal learning experiences
- Work/family concerns
- Age/Illness/Infirmity

Who are the new students?

What are effects of aging?

- Age affects all facets of the person:
  - Appearance
  - Musculoskeletal system
  - Cardiovascular system
  - Respiratory system
  - Excretory system
  - Endocrine system
  - Reproductive system
  - Nervous system

These changes have an impact on classroom performance.

Who are the new students?

Challenges for older learners

Sight issues
- Visual acuity
- Clarity
- Focusing capacity
- Dark/light adaptation capacity

Thought/learning/ memory issues
- In processing capacity (storage)
- In recall (memory)

Hearing issues
- Reduction in speech discrimination
- Performance deficit with background noise or speech that is sped up

What are the implications for the classroom?

Who are the new students?

Classroom solutions

Sight issues
- On the board, use large letters.
- Keep distance from board to a minimum.
- When using video or projection in a darkened room, allow time for adjustment to light changes.

Hearing issues
- Keep background noise to a minimum.
- Speak slowly and distinctly.

Thought/learning/ memory issues
- Repetition and review of content
- Mnemonic devices

Who are the new students?

Challenges from other barriers

- Discomfort with learning process
- Poor study skills
- Literacy issues (not just English literacy)
- Negative self-concept
- No time to study
- No family support
- No internal motivation

Strategies for addressing new needs

Teacher's challenge

Student challenges
- Physical impairments
- Semi-literacy
- Lack of motivation
- Self-concept issues
- Lifestyle issues
- Need for citizenship

+

Citizenship skills
- English oral & written proficiency
- Knowledge of US History
- Knowledge of US government

Strategies for addressing new needs

Addressing physical issues

- Have students sit in front to see and hear better.
- Pair with student who can assist.
- Use large print.
- Speak up, speak clearly, repeat.
- Encourage taping, requests to slow down.
- Encourage standing during class if needed.
- Take short breaks in long sessions.

Strategies for addressing new needs

Addressing motivation

- Ask students for benefits of citizenship, list them; add more; post the list; review
- Affirmation: "I will be an American citizen." Every class. Post a banner.
- Remind students that while studying is short-term, the benefits are permanent.

Strategies for addressing new needs

Addressing lifestyle issues

- **Discuss time management:**
  - Provide a recommended amount of study.
  - Ask students to figure out what times they can study: on the bus, while baby-sitting, instead of TV.
  - Discuss basic time management tips.
  - Different ways to study: listen to tapes, review materials, write sentences, etc.
- **Provide a contract** identifying goal, commitment, benefits.
- **Provide a letter** to family members asking for support, identifying benefits to the family

Strategies for addressing new needs

Contract

I, _____, will be an American citizen. I will do this because I want to:

- _____
- _____
- _____

To do this, I will study at least _____.
I will study _____.

_____ *(Signature)*

Strategies for addressing new needs

Letter to family

Dear _____,
Your relative, _____, will be an American citizen. S/He will do this because:

- _____
- _____
- _____

S/he will study at least _____. S/he needs your support and encouragement.
Please help him/her study. Help him/her have time to study and go to class.
When s/he is a citizen, the whole family will benefit.
S/he can do it!

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Strategies for teaching Citizenship content for this cohort

Address learning issues

- Use strategies that build success:
  - Break every concept and task into small steps.
  - Constantly check to verify learning is occurring (*many cultural, social, or personal barriers prevent students from admitting they don't understand*).
  - Review class with "What did we learn today?" Each student who responds is applauded.
  - Use praise, body language, tone of voice and other positive reinforcement to create a positive atmosphere.
  - Atmosphere that making mistakes in class is OK.
  - Take more time than for classes with less challenged students.

Strategies for teaching Citizenship content for this cohort

Address learning issues (cont.)

Structure the class to help challenged learners:

⇨ **Affirmation:** *I will be an American citizen.*

⇨ **Preview of the day's lesson**

⇨ **Content learning in *themed* segments:**

- vocabulary
- content, using realia
- dictation practice

Positive reinforcement throughout

⇨ **Review of the day's lesson**

⇨ **Homework assignment or study reminder**

Strategies for teaching Citizenship content for this cohort

Sample theme: Pilgrims

Vocabulary: *Discuss, have students make flash cards*

Content: *Story of the Pilgrims; read, summarize orally in own words, discussion*

Realia: *Calendar, pictures of Pilgrims, first Thanksgiving*

Practice: *True/False, Short answer, Puzzles, Multiple choice questions selected from the 100; Have students make flash cards of questions*

Dictation: *vocabulary, phrases, dictations from practice list*

Homework: *Complete cards, study, next assignment*

Strategies for teaching Citizenship content for this cohort

Learning aids: help & fun

- Home-made flash cards & tapes
- Memory aids
- Charts and Tables to organize information
- Role plays
- Puzzles
- WWW

Strategies for teaching Citizenship content for this cohort

Flash cards and tapes

- Students buy index cards—2 colors; make as you go
- 1st color: vocabulary words
  - English on front, their language on back
- 2nd color: 100 practice questions
  - Question on front, answer on back
- Make as you go
- Allow students to tape dictation
- Another set of cards could be for dictation

Strategies for teaching Citizenship content for this cohort

Memory aid—13 colonies

- 3 with "New"
  - New York, New Jersey, New Hampshire
- 6 with women's names
  - Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Delaware
- 3 long names
  - Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania
- 1 island: Rhode Island

Strategies for teaching Citizenship content for this cohort

Charts and Tables

Strategies for teaching Citizenship content for this cohort

Role play—3 branches

Constitution

Legislative

A student or group of students acts as Congress and passes a tax law. They hand a piece of paper with the law on it to the "President."

Executive

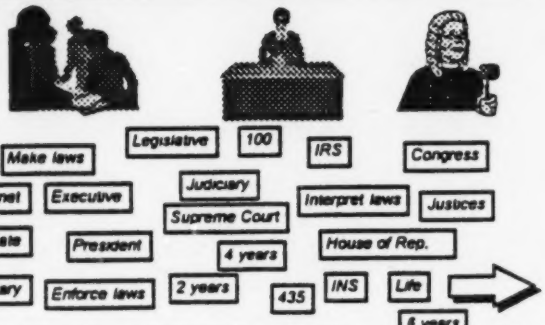
The "President" signs the paper. He asks a student acting as an IRS agent to get the taxes from a taxpayer.

Judiciary

A taxpayer thinks the tax is not constitutional and asks a judge to decide.

Strategies for teaching Citizenship content for this cohort

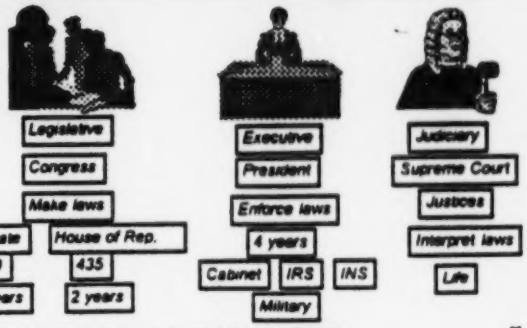
Puzzle—3 branches



Make laws | Legislative | 100 | IRS | Congress | Cabinet | Executive | Judiciary | Interpret laws | Justices | Supreme Court | Senate | President | 4 years | House of Rep. | Military | Enforce laws | 2 years | 435 | INS | Life | 6 years

Strategies for teaching Citizenship content for this cohort

Puzzle—3 branches: answer



Legislative | Executive | Judiciary
Congress | President | Supreme Court
Make laws | Enforce laws | Justices
Senate | House of Rep. | 4 years | Interpret laws
100 | 435 | Cabinet | IRS | INS | Life
6 years | 2 years | Military

Strategies for teaching Citizenship content for this cohort

Dictation practice

- Begin with single words
- Advance to phrases
- Finally, use actual practice sentences
- Try to use different speakers
- Encourage students to tape someone reading the questions so that they can practice on their own. (*If they each get a different speaker, they can trade tapes with each other for more practice.*)

Strategies for teaching Citizenship content for this cohort

Test-taking practice

- Begin simulation of real test as course progresses, easier to more difficult
- Practice answering on actual answer sheet

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Strategies for teaching Citizenship content for this cohort

Realia and tools

- Realia kit
  - Flag
  - Tape of anthem, pledge of allegiance
  - Pictures of monuments, leaders
  - Scantron forms
  - Pictures of money showing presidents
  - Calendar for holidays
  - Documents
  - Telephone book
- Other tools
  - Banner: "I will be an American citizen."
  - Index cards with questions
  - Vocabulary cards
  - Role play items
  - Tapes of different speakers doing dictation

WWW Resources

- www.ins.usdoj.gov
  - Has interactive test, study guides
- www.casas.org/09Citizenship/09CitMaster.html
- www.usia.gov/usa/usa.htm
  - Lots of information and links
- www.mindspring.com/~citizenship/links.html
- www.nnirr.org
- www.whitehouse.gov/WH/Welcome.html
- www.senate.gov